

The Athenian Mercury.

Saturday, February 16. 1695.

Quest. 1. **W**hat degree does silver bear amongst other metals, what are the chief properties of it, and from whence is it that we have the greatest part of it?

Ans. Silver is the finest metal in the world excepting Gold, 'twill beat very thin, and stretch in wiew beyond any sort of metal but Gold, even as small as a man's hair. It will not rust, but Cankers a little into a pale blew, consumes some small matter in melting, 'tis dissolvable, like other metals, in *Aqua fortis*; And a thin plate of it, as a great or lesser piece, rub'd with brimstone and held over a Candle splits and moulders, because it is Calcin'd; the powder of which paints glass yellow. It chiefly comes from the *West-Indies*, and *High-Germany*, being dug out of Mines in an *Oar* not much unlike Lead or Antimony, and the richer veins of Lead are said to have much Silver in them. When this *Oar* lies open to the Air it sends forth sometimes branches like a white moss, of pure Silver call'd the Silver tree, and is said to be imitated by some chymists who also pretend to make factitious real Silver by the lower preparation of their Philosophers-stone; besides which there is a Counterfeit of it, made by whitening Copper, too well known to those sparks amongst us who cheat by false plate or money. The touchstone and fire are generally the methods 'tis tryed by. A vessel of it in common use is long a heating, but then preserves its heat as long.

Quest. 2. *I shall not take the way that some persons have done, in hopes to gain an Answer, by accusing you of unkindness, in not resolving my Query, although perhaps as often sent as most you receive, and with as many Requests added to mine; but rather conclude, if I patiently wait, I shall sooner or later be satisfied by you: And since I observed in one of your late Mercuries, that you would have answered a Question, if it had again been sent you; and not knowing but mine may, as well as others, be lost in the Crowd, I shall here again repeat it as follows, viz. What are the Opinions of the Remonstrants, as to matters of Faith? I beg the favour of you to be as full upon it as your Paper will permit; which will be no small Obligation to me, and many other of your hearty Friends.*

Ans. The Remonstrants believing that the Christian Religion principally consists in obeying the precepts of the Gospel, they maintain that we must particularly endeavour to shun all errors which may divert us from piety, and that we ought to instruct our selves in the doctrines of the Christian Religion, according to the relation they have to the obedience which God requires of us. They believe if Christians were not so divided as they are, 'twould be sufficient only to keep to this principle, but since controversies have caused so many divisions amongst them, they look upon it almost necessary to examine the importance of these controversies, that they may not rashly condemn such men, as excluded from salvation, who might be as good Christians as themselves. They do not allow of engaging our selves into such subtil questions about which God has revealed nothing to us, as whether eternity is successive or not, about the manner of God's immensity, and such like. They satisfy themselves with proposing divers opinions, and shewing the unconquerable difficulties wherein they

shou'd involve themselves let them embrace which side they wou'd, and therefore they conclude it is enough to believe the ground of things, without its being necessary to decide any thing about the manner of 'em, determining only in such cases where the scripture or our reason instructs us so clearly that 'twould be impossible to remain in doubt. They maintain in general, that God is not the Author of sin, but say when men sin God determines them by the concurrence of his providence to will certain things which are sins, and yet without having any part in their sins; because God performs only what is *Physical* in their actions, and men the *moral* part. In respect to the sin of our first parents, they say that God to prove their obedience forbid them to eat of the fruit of a certain tree under pain of death, which they understand of a temporal and not eternal death, and that after they had suffer'd divers miseries their souls shou'd be separated from their bodies, whereas if they had obey'd God they shou'd never have dyed. As to the effect that the sin of our first parents has produced in their posterity, besides the miseries and death which we inherit from them, they hold that Children are born less pure than Adam was when he was created, and with a certain inclination to pleasure and whatsoever can cause it, which they do not immediately take from Adam, but from their mothers; and that this inclination varies according as the defects of those which bare them are different, and according to the diversity of their temperaments. This disposition being natural to Children, the least occasion is sufficient to incline them to sin: As soon as they are arrived to any knowledge they ardently embrace whatever creates them any pleasure, and avoid pain at any price whatever. But whilst they are incapable of making any use of their reason, the Remonstrants maintain that this inclination is not properly a sin, and that it cannot merit eternal death. They further say that there is nothing criminal in this inclination, after they are capable of using their reason, provided they don't consent to follow it when it inclines them to violate any of God's commands. Concerning the covenants which God made with Abraham and Moses, they say the last was not capable of carrying the *Israelites* to a perfect sanctification, which they look upon to be the reason for making the covenant of grace; and that 'twas the pure mercy of God which induced him to make this covenant with men, wherein at the same time he discover'd his mercy towards sinners and his hatred to sin, by pardoning none but through the sacrifice of his son. They say, our Saviour added to the Laws of Moses those which prohibit swearing, putting away a man's wife except for Adultery, and the command of loving our enemies, this as he was a prophet; and that he executed the office of a Priest in the oblation of the sacrifice which hath expiated our sins, and the intercession he now continually makes for us in heaven. Although they affirm that God cou'd have pardon'd us, if he had thought fit, without the sacrifice of his son, yet they say he was not willing to do it, except his son wou'd offer up himself a sacrifice for the salvation of mankind. They maintain this doctrine in opposition to those who believe that Jesus Christ perform'd no act of his Priestly function upon earth, and likewise against those who say he compleated his oblation upon the Cross. And they say he perform'd the office of a King, in that being enter'd into heaven by his own blood, he received from God the power of Converting men, and expiating their sins by making them acceptable to God through the holiness

• which he guides them. The *Remonstrants* also hold, That Jesus Christ did not suffer the pains which we have deserved, either in respect to their duration or greatness, but that God through his mercy, was willing to accept the sacrifice of his Death for the expiation of our sins, and upon his account has remitted that punishment which we merited. They believe, that those who from this Opinion, accuse them of lessening the satisfaction, have not taken their Idea of this Sacrifice from the *Scripture*, but some School Divines. They affirm that both reason and the *Scriptures* furnish them with invincible proofs for this opinion, and say that herein they agree with Calvin who said that *the merit of Jesus Christ depended alone on the grace of God, and that if we would oppose it simply, and of it self, to the Judgment of God, it would not avail because there is nothing in man that can merit any thing before God.*

They look upon predestination to be only a decree of God by which of his good pleasure, he has resolved from all Eternity to elect as his, to justify and save all those who should believe in Jesus Christ, and till death persevere in the faith: And on the contrary to look upon unbelievers, as rebels, and to damn them if they continued in their incredulity. This decree they neither look upon to be election or reprobation, but the foundation of both which God Executes in time, when he chooses for his people those who actually believe in Jesus Christ, and saves them when they have persevered in the faith: And also when he beholds the wicked as objects of his wrath, and damns them after they are dead in their impenitency and wickedness. The *Remonstrants* believing that those who are damn'd, are so through their own fault, since they are not excluded from salvation, but through their own impenitency; maintaining they might partake of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who was offered for all men without exception, the fruits whereof being universally applyed to all who would believe in him, without which they could enjoy nothing of it. In respect to the heathens who have never heard the Gospel, they suppose they will not be condemn'd for not having believed what they never heard of; and that they should not be condemn'd to everlasting flames, if they made a good use of what light God had given them; consequently that we might suppose, either that God would so communicate to them the benefits of our Saviour's death, that by an extraordinary grace he might save some of those who have not known him, not through their own fault, but because the Gospel was never preached to them: Or that God would discover his Word to them by some uncommon method, as he did to Cornelius the Centurion: They do not believe the Call of God so powerful that it cannot be resisted, since they hold it does not destroy man's Free Will whereby he is able to turn from sin, or to pursue it, and whereas those who are not converted might be so if they would; those that were, had a power to refuse it if they would not. They think that since God gives Laws, to which he has added threats and promises, that he fails not of executing according as these Laws are observ'd or violated, since he exhorts men to be converted, and praises them when they turn from their evil ways, and is angry with those that refuse it; it supposes that he gives to all men a sufficient means to do their duty.

The *Remonstrants* hold that God does not in the Gospel require such a perfect obedience as is never interrupted by any sin, so as to threaten Eternal death to those who commit the least fault. He contents himself with requiring repentance, which supposes that we have offended him, and does not exclude all sin for the time to come, but only that of habit. They think perseverance in piety absolutely necessary to salvation; yet doubt not but a man truly regenerated may fall from that state. As to justification they say God regards our obedience, although imperfect,

as if it were perfect, in consideration of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. They hold we can never be assured we shall be saved how holily soever we live, and therefore that St. Paul commanded us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling.

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Which Office is kept at the places following having signs out with the Inscription aforesaid.

1. At the George Inn in the Burrough of Southwark.
2. At the end of Fan-Church-street near Aldgate.
3. Over again St. Christophers Church in Thread-needle-street, near the Royal-Exchange.
4. The Corner of Hooper-Lane, in West-Smithfield.
5. In Bedford-Court in Bedford-Street, Covent-Garden.
6. At the end of Charles-street, next King-street-Westminster.

Whereas, Divers Eminent Merchants, Citizens, and others having set up the said office, where all artifices and traders, may have recourse with any kind of goods, Merchandise, or Manufactories, from any of the Shires or Towns of England; and have the same Turned or Exchanged into any sort of goods for the better carrying on their respective Trades or factories, as Cloth Silks, Norwich and Canterbury Stuffs, Druggets, Flannels, Berges, Stockings, or any other wrought, or unwrought goods whatsoever of the Growth, and Product of any of the Countrys and Towns of England; which will not only prevent bad debts and the Inconveniency of Trading, on Credit and time, but will occasion quick and repeated returns in Trade to the great increase of wealth and riches; and answer the most ends and uses of money which is as easily understood, as with Coin by ascertaining and fixing the price of goods, after the Standard of Gold and Silver, each person setting his value on his said goods and entered in the books of the office, provided for that purpose, according to the market price; which is to be performed at reasonable rates, as is hereafter mentioned.

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All the Offices are as one Office, with the same intelligence sent to each other Office every day, as business comes in, and the books kept all alike; so that the same intelligence that serves the City, is in the Suburbs likewise.

And a Catalogue of such Goods as are entered in the books are to be printed every week; so that by this method those Goods which lay in several Traders hands may be published to those who have occasion for them; without exposing any persons names but to those who are willing to buy; where each person is to pay for searching the Books and writing each particular directions where such Goods are, which is not more then the Recommending of one friend to deal or Trade with another.